

WHY STAND WITH ISRAEL TODAY?

By Jack Hayford

Israel is a land about which God says – uniquely, prophetically, redemptively, and repeatedly in the Bible – ***“This is Mine.”*** God refers to Israel as He does to no other land on Earth. Israel was raised up to be a light to the Gentiles.

The Church at its inception was virtually entirely Jewish, and it remained so until the Gospel began to spread. Ultimately the Gospel spread to Antioch – where the first Gentile congregation began – the base from which the Gospel spread into all the world.

In the book of Romans, chapters 9 through 11, the Apostle Paul deals with the question of the Jews in God’s providence and purpose. These three chapters virtually stand alone, within the whole of the Bible, as an elaboration of the theology of God’s dealing with Jews. The Jews were the “first fruit”...the “first people” (through Abraham) to understand a covenant God. They then relayed the riches of that truth to the world, and through their agency, the Messiah came into the world. The Word of God calls Jews the “root” and Gentiles the “branches.” We’re reminded that while *“because of unbelief, some of them were broken off and you stand by faith,”* we are not to become haughty but to fear: *“For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.”* When the fullness of the Gentiles is completed, *“all Israel will be saved.”* (v. 11:16-27)

We are living in a sobering moment in history that calls us, as believers in Jesus Christ, to take a stand with Israel. ***We could be people of the last hours.*** We are not to be passive in the face of prophecy; ***we are called to pray*** with passion, ***to intercede***, and ***to minister*** according to the words of the Savior who said it is not our task to speculate when the end will be. ***It is our responsibility to do Kingdom business until He comes*** (Luke 19:13).

This is not about politics, this is about the Word of God...but the political ramifications are extremely dramatic. Scripture declares there will come a time when all the nations of the world will turn against Israel. It is so highly conceivable this could happen in our time that it is critical to outline: *why we should stand with Israel today.*

EIGHT REASONS FOR STANDING WITH ISRAEL

- 1) Every believer is charged to make the Jews a priority in their value system and to render thanksgiving from their hearts for God’s work via them as a people.**

Understanding the basis of the attention that we give to the Jews has to do with understanding **God’s divine order** and things that God said. It involves a people and a land.

- Every believer is charged to make Jews a priority in their value system **because God has.**

- The Lord selected a people...He began by selecting a man named Abraham. The Lord said that through the seed of Abraham (in relation with his wife, Sarah, giving birth to the promised child, Isaac) all the nations of the Earth will be blessed...every human being having access to the divine blessing of Almighty God.
- In Genesis 12:3, the Lord says in the covenant He makes with Abraham: *"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*
 - This relates not only to a people (the Jews), but it also relates to a land (Israel).
 - God will judge nations and deal with them for their decisions, just as He does individuals.
- The Lord chose them for purposes: *"...who are the Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."* (Romans 9:4)
 - **The Adoption:** God's divine choice of the seed of Abraham as a people.
 - **The Glory:** the manifest presence of God revealing Himself.
 - **The Covenants:** commitments that God makes:
 - ***The Abrahamic Covenant...***God says, "I will give you a people and a land, and through this seed the nations of the Earth will be blessed." (Genesis 17)
 - ***The Mosaic Covenant...***the revelation of the law, given as a teaching means to lead us to Christ: redemption through the blood of the Lamb.
 - ***The New Covenant...***In Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God says in words almost parallel: "For the time will come that I will take My law and I will make a new covenant with you, and I will put My Spirit within you."
 - **The Greatest Gift:** the wonder of the gift of Jesus to mankind. God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son...He gave Him through the Jews, and He came as a Jew. Jesus Himself, speaking to the woman of Samaria, said, "Salvation is of the Jews."

So Scripture speaks to us very clearly: *we're dealing with the roots of everything that has to do with the revelation of God to humankind.* The proof of this is in the very existence of the Jews as a people and the fact that they've been recovered as a nation. Today the struggle is over Jerusalem, over Israel, and over the presence of Jews and their right to have a land. There are few nations willing to make an abiding commitment to stand by the Jews and Israel, but the Bible says God will honor those who do.

2) ***Our place in God's present order inextricably links us with the Jews as a people and thereby the land of Israel according to the Word.***

When we put our faith in the Redeemer who came through the Jews, we enter into a line of those who have trusted God according to His revealed grace and redemptive purpose.

- Scripture declares that, spiritually speaking, when you receive the Lord, you become a Jew (Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:26-29).
- If you are a believer, *you cannot be consistent with the whole of Scripture and take a position that is passive toward the Jews and Israel.*

3) God has made unique declarations regarding the land of Israel which have never been rescinded:

- Leviticus 25:23 – The land is the Lord’s land, and it is His to assign and dispose of: *“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine...”*
- Deuteronomy 32:43 – *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people...He will provide atonement for His land and His people.”*
- 2 Chronicles 7:20 – God says if the people violate Me *“...I will uproot them from My land which I have given them...”*
- Psalm 85:1-2 – *“Lord, you have been favorable to Your land, You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin.”*
- Isaiah 8:8 – This land belongs to Father God and it is the land of His Messiah: *“...and the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.”*
- Jeremiah 2:7 – The Lord tells the people why there will come the loss, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. *“I brought you into a bountiful country...but when you entered, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.”*
- Ezekiel 38:16 – God is speaking to people in the end times who rise up against Israel. God is speaking of a confrontation that will take place in His land. *“You will come up against My people Israel...I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you...”*
- Joel 1:6, 2:18, 3:2 – Three times in this book, the land is referred to as belonging to the Lord. *“For a nation has come up against My land...”* (1:6) *“Then the Lord will be zealous for His land...”* (2:18) *“I will gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.”* (3:2)
- Hosea 9:3 – This refers to the scattering of Israel: *“They shall not dwell in the Lord’s land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and shall eat unclean things in Assyria.”*
- Zechariah 9:16 – *“The Lord their God will save them in that day, as the flock of His people, for they shall be like the jewels of a crown, lifted like a banner over His land...”*

When we talk about Israel, we are dealing with: 1) a piece of property that God has made pronouncements about and 2) God's people to whom He's given the land. It is a major issue with the Creator of all things, and it is non-negotiable. **Things that God has said, uniquely, about Israel have never been rescinded.**

- Not only does the land belong to God, but also God has committed the land to Abraham and his offspring via Isaac forever. (Genesis 17:7-8)
- *"With a little wrath I hid My face from you...but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed..."* (Isaiah 54:8-10)
- The loss of governance by Israel through sin and dispersion has not altered God's announced commitment to make it theirs forever. (Read Ezekiel 37:1-28)

4) Israel's present conflict is neither by their initiative nor perpetuated by expansionism on their part.

The general attitude of the world today regards the Palestinians as the underdog, but Israel is defending the land covenanted to them in 1917 and established by the United Nations Assembly in 1948. The Palestinian goal is not to secure a homeland but to drive Israel out altogether. For the sake of mounting public opinion against Israel, surrounding, well-resourced Arab nations have never offered refuge to the Palestinians. The majority of the world doesn't know this, and nobody is bothering to tell them because sympathies are so overridden by other forces.

5) To stand with Israel is not to oppose Arab peoples as an entity or to oppose the rights of Arabs living in Israel to a peaceful, politically secure, and prosperous life.

God has no disposition against *any* human being, certainly not Arabs who are the offspring of Ishmael, the other son of His chosen leader Abraham. Standing for Israel doesn't require an anti-Arab stance and doesn't require us to be loveless toward other peoples.

6) The relentless animosities of sectors of the Arab world are not merely political causes but are driven by spiritual powers that will not be satisfied until Israel ceases to exist.

The forces opposed to Israel are not simply those of people who don't like Jews. We are Caught in the stream of *spiritual forces* greater than humanity, forces that cannot be overthrown politically or by the power of persuasion. *These forces can only be broken by intercessory prayer where principalities and powers are cast down.*

7) The same spirit driving these animosities is equally opposed to Christians as to Jews and in time will eventually bring persecution to both.

Just as Scripture states there are two witnesses that will be put to death in Jerusalem at the very end of time (Revelation 11), there have been two witnesses that have stood for God throughout history – the Jews and the Christians.

The hostilities and animosities are just as leveled at believers as they are at Israel, because there is a spirit in the world that is against all that is called God and everything about Him.

- God as Creator – to Whom we owe our worship.
- God as Judge – to Whom we owe our accountability.
- God as Redeemer – Who has shown Himself through His Son, Jesus.
- God as the moral Lawgiver of all humanity – to Whom we owe a responsibility in terms of our behavior.

8) A biblical assignment and a divine promise summon our stand in faith, our intercession with expectancy, and our support with promise.

We are called to stand with Israel today because we could be people of the last hour. The Lord has called us to be people with moral and biblical conviction, walking wisely and knowing His Word. He will honor those who make an abiding commitment to stand with the land He's called uniquely His. (Psalm 122:6).

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO “STAND UP FOR ISRAEL.”

- 1) Equip yourself with reliable information, avoiding bigotry and disallowing “blind spots.” Recognize the disposition of the popular press. Assess reports cautiously but not with paranoia. Become familiar with the basics of history in the Middle East, and understand the past century.
- 2) Accept with continuing faithfulness the Bible's call to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalm 122:6), and pray that our Nation will govern in the light of Genesis 12:1-3... “I will bless those who bless you...”
- 3) Prayerfully consider visiting Israel as a point of practical support.
- 4) Show friendship toward Jewish friends. Affirm that you, as a believer, stand with Israel as a point of your Bible-based commitment to God.
- 5) While acknowledging the terrorist habits of radical Muslims, be gracious to others.

Take action because it's such a pivotally important time. Today, the showdown that we face is so close to being the nations of the earth against Israel and whoever is left that stands with them.

The final issue will be “Who is for Christ and His way and who isn't?” The Lord has called us to be a people who will touch people and will stand with moral and biblical convictions for critical issues...and this is one.